



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

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For Immediate Release: November 12, 2004

GOVERNOR LINGLE APPOINTS RICK BISSEN AS ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

HONOLULU – Governor Linda Lingle has appointed 1st Deputy Attorney General Rick Bissen as the acting director of public safety. He will oversee the state's corrections division, including state prisons and community correctional facilities as well as the law enforcement division, including the narcotics, protective services and sheriffs divisions. Bissen will start his new position on Dec. 1.

"Rick has done a tremendous job for our state during his 23-month tenure with the Attorney General's Office," said Governor Lingle. "I have every confidence that he will continue to serve the public with the same level of enthusiasm and professionalism in his new role with the Department of Public Safety. Rick is well respected in the legal and law enforcement communities, he is a skilled manager, and has a proven record of working collaboratively with state, local and federal organizations."

Bissen replaces John Peyton, who is resigning to return to Bosnia-Herzegovina to continue his work on helping that nation implement the new Rule of Law administration. Prior to his appointment as director, Peyton served as the vice president of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"I want to commend John Peyton for his outstanding effort to manage the public safety operations in Hawai'i," said Governor Lingle. "John and his team have set the state in the right direction by developing a long-term plan to improve our outdated corrections system, including

upgrading the physical facilities and implementing programs to help inmates increase their chances for success upon release.”

As 1st deputy attorney general, Bissen has been instrumental in overseeing improvements to the Hawai`i Youth Correctional Facility. He has worked with the American Civil Liberties Union and the U.S. Department of Justice to address concerns raised about problems at the youth facility.

Prior to joining the Attorney General’s Office in January 2003, Bissen was the Maui County prosecuting attorney (1995-2003). He also was a supervising deputy prosecutor primarily handling violent crime and high-profile cases for the department. He was also a law partner in the firm of Cardoza, Fukuoka and Bissen and clerked for retired Second Circuit Court Judge Richard R. Komo.

Bissen has served on numerous committees focusing on domestic violence, juvenile justice and women offenders and was a founding member of the Maui Drug Court program.

The Maui County Bar Association selected him Lawyer of the Year in 2001, and in October 1999 he received the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Men’s March Against Violence committee on O`ahu.

Bissen is a graduate of the University of Hawai`i William S. Richardson School of Law and the University of Santa Clara. He has served on the faculty at the National Advocacy Center’s prosecutor’s training facility on the campus of the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

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